

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASUA NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7653

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: DECLASSIFY UPON RECEIPT

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, XO, IN

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH COMMENT ON HANCOCK

1. ON HIS RETURN FROM KABUL TODAY, FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH MADE FIRST OFFICIAL INDIAN COMMENT ON HANCOCK ACTIVITY. ACCORDING TO INDIAN WIRE SERVICE, SWARAN SINGH SAID THAT QTE LARGE AND LOUD PRESENCE UNQTE OF NAVY OF ONE BIG POWER WAS BOUND TO RESULT IN THE PRESENCE OF THE NAVIES OF OTHER POWERS. INDIAN FEAR WAS THAT QTE THIS TYPE OF RIVALRY MAY CREATE PROBLEMS FOR THE LITTORAL COUNTRIES, AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE DESIROUS OF KEEPING THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA AS A REGION OF TRANQUILITY UNQTE.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID GOI STILL STUDYING PROS AND
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CONS OF OFFICIAL US STATEMENT JUSTIFYING MOVEMENT OF

TAKS FORCE AND ONLY AFTER DETAILED EXAMINATION WOULD FOREIGN MINISTER BE ABLE TO GIVE CONSIDERED STATEMENT. HE ADDED QTE IT IS NOT EASY FOR US TO UNDERSTAND WHAT PARTICULAR TASK HAVE THE AMERICANS BEFORE THEM IN WHICH THEY HAVE THOUGHT IT NECESSARY TO CONSTITUTE THE SO-CALLED TASK FORCE UNQTE.

3. INDIAN PRESS TODAY (NOV 1) GIVES CONSIDERABLY LESS ATTENTION TO HANCOCK THAN YESTERDAY. HOWEVER SUCH EDITORIALS AS HAVE APPEARED, AS FOR EXAMPLE THE PRO-COMMUNIST "PATRIOT" AND THE RIGHTIST "MOTHERLAND" OF NEW DELHI HAVE BEEN SHARPLY CRITICAL. IN BOMBAY "THE ECONOMIC TIMES" RAN A STRONG EDITORIAL. E.G., QTE IF ONE IGNORED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DOMESTIC TROUBLES IN THE US THE PLAY CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS LOYAL SUPPORT TO A DISCREDITED CAUSE. A DEEPER REASON FOR MAINTAINING A FACADE OF CRISIS IS THE INCREASING DEPENDENCE OF MR. NIXON ON PENTAGON TO NEUTRALISE THE CIVILIAN OPPOSITION TO HIS INTERPRETATION OF PRESIDENTIAL POWERS. END QTE. "THE FREE PRESS" ADDED QTE THE US SHOW OF FORCE IS BOUND TO INVITE SOVEIT COUNTER-ACTION AND THIS BIG POWER RIVALRY WILL ONLY HELP TO HEIGHTEN TENSION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. END QTE

4. COMMENT: WE ASSUME SWARAN SINGH REMARKS WILL CAUSE HANCOCK STORY TO RESURFACE AS FRONT-PAGE ISSUE IN PRESS TOMORROW BUT WITH CONTINUING EDITORIAL RESERVE BY PRESS PENDING GOI DECISION ON FORCEFULNESS WITH WHICH TO PRESS OPPOSITION TO TASK FORCE DEPLOYMENT IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA.
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